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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9758

INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE IMMEDIATE 0239

RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA IMMEDIATE 4523

RUEHG/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 1123

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0909

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000181

SIPDIS

STATE FOR S AND NEA, NEA/MAG AND NEA/IPA

TEL AVIV FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/03/2029

TAGS: PREL OPDC KISL KWBG KPAL IS MO

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN KING PROTESTS ISRAELI EVICTIONS IN JERUSALEM IN LETTERS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA AND OTHERS

REF: JERUSALEM 0319 (NOTAL)

Classified By: CDA Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: King Mohammed VI, as chair of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), has written to President Obama and other leaders asking them to press Israel to halt plans to demolish 88 Arab homes and evict 1,500 Palestinians in the area near the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. He claimed the evictions would violate international law and agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. The King feared that this would lead to worsening tension and violence, particularly in the current difficult post-Gaza environment. He also underscored his personal commitment to a peace process leading to a two-state solution, and his intent to engage on its behalf. The King has been increasingly vocal in his Jerusalem Committee role, in part to head off Moroccan Islamists' efforts to mobilize support on issue taking. End Summary.

¶2. (U) According to the official Moroccan press agency (MAP), on March 2, Morocco's King Mohammed VI sent letters to President Obama, the leaders of other UN Security Council permanent member states, Pope Benedict XVI, and to the Czech Prime Minister as EU President, calling on them to press Israel to abandon its new plan to demolish 88 homes owned by Arab nationals, evicting 1,500 Palestinians in the Al Bustan area adjacent to the walls of the Holy Al Aqsa Mosque. The King wrote in his capacity as the Chairman of the OIC's Jerusalem (Al-Quds) Committee, a role he inherited from his father.

¶3. (U) The letter underscored, as he has previously, that the Israelis are required to "preserve the special character of the holy city, and avoid changing "the architectural and demographic realities of the city." He called recipients to act to compel Israel to desist from implementing its "unacceptable" plan. The King made clear that the planned forced removal of Palestinians would only lead to further tensions and violence, particularly in the current difficult circumstances in the region and the painful humanitarian situation in Gaza. He pleaded for the international community to intercede with the Israelis to stop the imposition of "facts on the ground."

¶4. (U) The King reiterated Morocco's continuous efforts to find a solution that will guarantee the establishment of an independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and concord, and in which final status issues, especially the fate of Al Quds (Jerusalem), would feature prominently." He also indicated he was eager to pursue his

own efforts to the promote peace and Arab and Islamic rights.

¶5. (C) Comment: King Mohammed's quick reaction on this issue underscores the seriousness with which he views his role as Al-Quds Committee Chairman. Before the Gaza crisis, Morocco was considering additional initiatives toward Israel.

The letter is also a mark of his determination to stay ahead of popular reaction to the Israeli actions. Mid-way through the Gaza crisis he moved both to take the lead on the issue and to limit local Islamists' ability to mobilize around it and to prevent them from gaining significant traction.

During the Gaza fighting, much of popular opinion in Morocco saw the USG as empowering the Israeli effort. That gradually increasing discontent stopped with end of the incursion and the arrival of our new Administration. The Embassy has not yet seen the original letter. End Comment.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

Jackson